



13th MEU's Family Gram Letterneck

Sept. 28, 2000

13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)

Vol. 2, No. 2

13th MEU(SOC) delivers in East Timor



Sgt. M.C. Miller

Lance Cpl. Steve Montgomery, a 20-year-old security Marine from Redding, Calif., hands an orange to local Oecussi children during a break in the Landing Craft Utility offload Sept. 15. The 13th MEU(SOC) and Tarawa ARG participated in a humanitarian assistance operation Sept. 14-16 in East Timor.

by Sgt. Matthew C. Miller

DILI, East Timor – It only took Marines and Sailors of 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group three days to help people here get a head start on a lifetime of independence.

In those three days, Sept. 14-16, 13th MEU(SOC) and Tarawa ARG delivered 570 tons of supplies, treated more than 890 medical and dental patients and performed numerous other missions in three East Timor cities.

The humanitarian assistance came during the midst of 13th MEU(SOC)'s six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf. The humanitarian assistance is conducted on a rotational basis, and

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MEU honors Tarawa

by SSgt. Stephen Gude

BETIO, Tarawa Atoll — Marines and Sailors of 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group commemorated the battle sacrifices of Marines and Sailors nearly 57 years ago by conducting two wreath-laying ceremonies, Aug. 29.

Honoring the servicemembers who stormed the beaches of Betio, the southernmost island in the Tarawa atoll, Nov. 20-23, 1943, one ceremony was held in the morning aboard ships of Tarawa ARG — USS Tarawa (LHA-1), USS Duluth (LPD-6) and USS Anchorage (LSD-36) — while another was held on Betio in the afternoon.

Aboard the ships, the gentle waves of the central Pacific gave a soothing, yet somber feel to the proceedings. Aboard USS Tarawa, formations of the ship's crew and Marines faced the ship's captain, 13th MEU(SOC)'s commander and the commander of Amphibious Squadron Five, all of whom spoke.



SSgt. Stephen Gude

Col. Christopher J. Gunther, commanding officer, 13th MEU(SOC), greets a member of the Betio Town Council Aug. 29 during ceremonies commemorating the sacrifice of Marines and Sailors during the battle for Tarawa, Nov. 20-22, 1943. The 13th MEU(SOC) conducted the ceremony as it passed the atoll.

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Oecussi resupplied by air, land and sea

13th MEU(SOC) takes goods to enclave

by Sgt. M.C. Miller

OECUSSI, East Timor – Marines and Sailors of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and the Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group delivered building materials and food September 14 and 15 to the World Food Program here in an effort to help to rebuild the city.

The 13th MEU(SOC) and ships of the Tarawa ARG, currently on a six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf, delivered supplies to three East Timor locations as part of a rotational humanitarian assistance operation.

The Oecussi enclave was almost totally destroyed last September when local militias protested East Timor's vote of independence from Indonesia. Nearly every building was burned to the ground; the only structure that survived unscathed was Oecussi's only Catholic church. All the citizens were either driven into refugee camps in nearby West Timor or into the surrounding hills to hide.

In the past year, United Nations' combined efforts with non-government relief organizations have helped rebuild Oecussi and the rest of East Timor. Circumstances have hindered the rebuilding effort however, including difficult travel, weather and militia attacks.

The only roads into the city are through the mountains, which makes it very difficult to deliver supplies by truck, and with the added difficulty of the wet season about to start, there would be little or no help to Oecussi within the next few months.

The MEU/ARG team had to find a way around the mountains to get help to this disadvantaged town. They opted to take an approximately 90 nautical mile sea route from Dili, the capital city of East Timor, to the small enclave surrounded by West Timor. Using two Landing Crafts, Air Cushioned the first day and adding two Landing Crafts, Utility the next day, the

please see OECUSSI, Page 9



Sgt. M.C. Miller

Two Marines from 13th MEU(SOC) stand along the beach at Oecussi while East Timorese gather to watch the operations Sept. 14.

MEU Message Board

From 13th MEU(SOC) CO

It certainly has been a very busy seven weeks for everyone in the 13th MEU(SOC) family. Since we left San Diego, we have journeyed to Hawaii, Tarawa, Australia, East Timor, Singapore and Thailand.

We are presently in the Indian Ocean, headed to the Arabian Gulf. I anticipate a lot of activity in that area as well, as we have several major exercises scheduled and lots of important work to accomplish.

Back home, all of the kids are back in school and fall activities are in full swing. The days are passing quickly for all.

President Reagan once said that many people spend their lifetime wondering if they have made a difference, but Marines never have that problem. As I look at our operations in East Timor, the photos taken of our many projects say it all -- you can see hope in the eyes of the East Timorese and the immense satisfac-



Col. C.J. Gunther

tion in the eyes of our troops. By their actions, the 13th MEU(SOC) demonstrated all that is right about America.

You should feel immensely proud of all they have accomplished.

Sergeant Major Senecal's words of wisdom

What a time to be on float. With the historic sites we've visited and the humanitarian assistance we've rendered, I'm proud to be a Marine and a member of the team that accomplished all this.

Everyone will not have an appreciation of what we've done, perhaps until they've retired or gotten out of the Marine Corps. Only then will some reflect on the great deeds that took place in East Timor, or the ambassadorship shown as we visited the Tarawa Atoll, or even the solemnity of the wreath-laying ceremony as we passed Guadalcanal, Savo Island and

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TARAWA

from page 1

"In the roll call of epic contests, the name 'Tarawa' stands out with unique singularity," said Col. Christopher J. Gunther, commanding officer, 13th MEU(SOC). "For Marines, and especially for the personnel of this great ship, Tarawa has a special resonance. Even to those who know very little of the history of warfare, the name Tarawa evokes memories of a brutal battle, one characterized by no-holds-barred fighting at close quarters... Tarawa was indeed an epic struggle, as one observer put it, of the utmost savagery."

The ceremony ended after a 21-gun salute with the playing of "Taps," and preparations were made to head ashore to the island where the battle that changed Marine Corps amphibious assault doctrine took place.

Under bright blue skies and surrounded by a thick wall of heat, approximately 100 Marines and Sailors from the ships of Tarawa ARG gathered outside the Betio Town Council building, where a memorial to the epic battle sits. A

large portion of the island's population was present, watching the event unfold.

This day, the Marines and Sailors landed in a manner different from that of their predecessors in 1943, flying in on UH-1N Hueys and CH-46 Sea Knights. There was also no machine gun fire to deal with. Instead, children ran down the island's streets, waving at the helicopters as they landed, while smiling citizens gathered outside the Town Council building, seeming to revel in the novelty of being caught in rotor wash.

Coming in by air allowed servicemembers excellent views of the former battlefields, which are now pristine white beaches on the southern side of Betio and a seawall on the north. Houses and buildings peek from underneath the shade of slim-trunked coconut trees whose edges follow the contours of the beaches. Large machines of war are visible as rusty shadows underneath the calm, light blue water. A Japanese ship sits nearly a half-mile off the north beach, where it became stuck in 1942 while Emperor Hirohito's minions were building up the island's defenses.

But back in 1943, before these houses were there, there was a rudimentary airstrip here, the reason this tiny sliver of land in the giant Pacific became so important that the United States sent 35,000 Marines and soldiers to take the island by force.

It was hard for some to put together the romantic beauty of the atoll, the friendliness of its people and the calm of its surrounding water and then think of the savagery and hell the 76-hour battle was.

"As we look around, we can try but we can not truly comprehend what (the Marines and Sailors who fought here) experienced," said Capt. A.D. Wall, the commander of Phibron-5, while speaking to the assemblage at the ceremony. "On November 20, 1943, the first of 5,000 men from the 2nd Marine Division poured ashore against a seemingly invincible fortress.

"Many were killed on the beach by the earth-shattering barrages of the island's defenders," the commodore continued. "Even the survivors paid dearly. The tropical sun burned their skin while volcanic dust choked their throats. After the third day, the smell of death was so prevalent that it could not be escaped."

"I believe the words spoken by Abraham Lincoln in his address delivered at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg best captures this moment," said Col. Gunther, delivering a speech during the ceremony. "Lincoln said, and I quote, 'But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, or long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.'"

Marines celebrate the history of their Corps almost from the time they step on the yellow footprints at Parris Island or Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, so the signifi-

*please see **TARAWA**, Page 8*



SSgt. Stephen Gude

A 21-gun salute is fired as Taps is played aboard USS Tarawa Aug. 29 during a wreath-laying ceremony commemorating the battle of Tarawa.

Sergeant Major

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Iron Bottom Sound.

But I appreciate these events as much now as I will in the future. Not every Marine gets the opportunity to see their history up close and personal, the way 13th MEU(SOC) Marines have. When your MEU warrior comes home, ask him or her

about what they've done. Ask them about the places they've been to, and the significance of what occurred at these spots. Watch as they describe for you what occurred. Watch their faces brighten, watch as the significance becomes clear to them.

What you will witness is the realization in the mind of a young American that he or she has done something not many other people have, or will. They will realize

just how special it is to be a Marine and that words like "honor, courage and commitment" are more than just a slogan, but a way of life.

I'm taking the long way of saying that because of where we've been and what we've done, we'll all be the better for it. Semper Fi, and we're another month closer to coming home.

Find 13th MEU(SOC) on the internet at
www.usmc.mil/13meu

Mission

from page 1

the 15th and 31st MEUs have previously visited the country to provide help and demonstrate U.S. resolve to continue providing help to East Timor.

The 13th MEU(SOC) and Tarawa ARG combined to provide the largest amount of American assistance yet to East Timor, which is still struggling with the aftermath of its new independence.

East Timor is a country of coastal and mountainous beauty, but afflicted by violence which has wrecked its serene scenery. It suffered heavy devastation throughout when, about one year ago, militias protested the vote for independence by attacking the citizens and burning buildings.

As Marines and Sailors walked through a hard-hit part of Dili, one remarked, "It looks like a MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) town." Several areas of the country were almost totally destroyed, including Oecussi, a city separated from the rest of East Timor by a swath of West Timor land.

A United Nations peacekeeping force, along with U.N. aid workers and non-government organizations, has been in the country since the independence vote was taken and the violence started. They continue to help the East Timorese rebuild, and have provided food and help to protect the citizens from further militia attacks.

To aid the U.N. and NGO efforts, the MEU(SOC)/ARG team stopped in the hot, sticky country after training in Australia and offloaded more than 700 Marines and Sailors each day to conduct 26 separate missions. Along with the food, building supplies, roofing supplies and medical and dental patients, the team painted two schools and a landmark cathedral steeple, installed seven basketball backboards and trained East Timorese people in heavy machinery operations and security procedures.

The MEU(SOC)/ARG also delivered two shipments of supplies from Project Handclasp, a nonprofit organization based in the United States. The deliveries included a variety of smaller items that were lost during the struggles with militias, such as hospital equipment, hygiene supplies, school supplies, food, and library books.

The friendly, open manner of the East Timorese was a revelation to the servicemembers, who didn't know what to expect from the locals.

"It would have been easy to think that everyone here is probably tired of what's

been going on, but they don't seem that way at all," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Asa Saunders, a 24-year-old chaplain's assistant aboard USS Tarawa, who volunteered to help paint a school. "These people have a lot of spirit, and are very nice."

As some Marines and Sailors walked to their destinations, children would run up, calling out to the "Americanos." One group of children serenaded some Marines with "USA! USA! USA!" when the Americans

'This is all for these kids, to give them a future.'

Cpl. William Cahrier

walked past.

"To be a part of this is great," said Saunders.

"This is one of the many very complete contributions the United States has made as part of the United States Support Group East Timor arrangement," said Sergio Viera de Mello, special representative of the Secretary General of the UN. "Thanks to all of you for the humanitarian assistance and support you have extended to the people of East Timor."

Each mission was accompanied by a security force, but the focus of effort was always helping the people.

"It's pretty bad out here, but to look around and see all these children waving at us and coming in to help us, that makes it pretty clear why we're here," said Cpl. William Cahrier, 22, of Marine Air Logistics Squadron 39. Cahrier helped paint a school, transforming the facility from a sun-bleached mauve to burgundy and gold, trimmed in white. "This is all for these kids, to give them a future."

"The U.S. military is composed of men and women who represent the high ideals and moral values of our country," said Col. Christopher Gunther, commanding officer, 13th MEU(SOC). "Nowhere is that more evident than here in East Timor."

The 13th MEU(SOC) and Tarawa ARG visit culminated in a ship's visit by more than 300 East Timorese and UN and U.S. personnel temporarily stationed in East Timor. A change-of-command ceremony was also held aboard USS Tarawa, as leadership of USGET changed from Marine Corps Col. Michael Williams to Army Col. Louis Traverzo.



Sgt. M.C. Miller

A Landing Craft Utility crew member from USS Tarawa directs a forklift with a load of Meals, Ready to Eat off an LCU at Oecussi, Sept. 15. The MREs were being given to the World Food Organization for distribution to East Timorese inside the Oecussi enclave. The 13th MEU(SOC) and Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group conducted a humanitarian assistance operation at three locations in East Timor from Sept. 14 through 16.

Command Element Scoop

Administration

With a month and a half down, the 13th MEU (SOC) admin office is settling into a smooth routine. "Time to do the Morning report, time to do the fitreps, time to make the doughnuts..." Despite having to deal with a few days of liberty in Darwin, Australia, we departed all Marines intact having supported some good training with boomerangs to boot. Darwin is a quaint little town with one department store and a hand full of bars, fun. It did give all of us some time to relax from the cramped spaces on the ship, and even Cpl. Mayertucker could afford a beer or two.

The Marines went ashore, participating in Humanitarian Assistance Operations in East Timor for three days as the S-1 aboard the ship accomplished the task of maintaining accountability of all the Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU (SOC), as they conducted several diverse humanitarian missions all over the countryside. Now, after leaving Singapore, we are back on the ship getting ready to pull into Phuket for a liberty port which some great sites to see. We miss you and can't wait to be steaming home.

Intelligence

Life for the members of the S-2 platoon got extremely busy after departing Hawaii as we prepared for upcoming exercises in Australia and Humanitarian Assistance Operations in East Timor.

Several S-2 Marines also received awards while in transit to Australia: Sgt. Jones, Sgt. Maes and Cpl. Sikes, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medals; Sgt. Morris and Cpl. Holm, Meritorious Mast.

Awards were presented while the Tarawa ARG steamed past the historic island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Sgt.

Maes, recovering in sickbay from an emergency appendectomy, was presented his NMCAM by Col. Gunther while resting comfortably after his latest morphine shot.

Upon arrival in Darwin, Australia, preparations for East Timor continued, interspersed with a little

bit of liberty. Maj. Lima, Maj. Jonese, and GySgt. Jefferson led most of the S-2 analysts on a visit to Australian Northern Command where they learned a lot from our allies down under. Many of the other members of the platoon participated in less stressful activities such as crocodile watching, tours, and taking in the local attractions. Cpl. O'Brien, picking up the slack while Sgt Maes recuperated, spent several days in the field photographing BLT training. While in Darwin, several members of the platoon, including Maj. Lima, Capt. Ortega and SSgt. Contreras, departed as part of the advance party to Dili, East Timor.

East Timor operations saw the participation of all members of the S-2 in either Community Relations projects or Force Protection and liaison missions. Maj. Jonese, GySgt. Jefferson, Capt. Bullard, Sgt. Snyder, and Sgt. Elizalde toured Dili and met with several UN Peacekeeping activities. GySgt. Starlin and Cpl. Petersen conducted weather observation on the beach, and SSgt. Drury, Cpl. Hoole, Cpl. Sikes, and Cpl. Kewin assisted in repainting the Dili cathedral.

SSgt. Tuggle and SSgt. Taylor went ashore at Suai, East Timor to conduct force protection operations while SSgt. Montgomery, SSgt. Zorotrian, and Sgt. Scott went ashore at the Oecussi Enclave, where they exercised their Arabic language skills as well as conducted force protection operations. Many other members of the platoon were sent to USS Duluth and USS Anchorage in support of the operations ashore.

The entire S-2 looked forward to a much deserved break at the ports of Singapore and Phuket, Thailand, our last breaks before stepping off for the Persian Gulf. Finally we would like to say "hello" to all our families and friends back home. We miss you all.

Operations

Well here we are, we've been gone for a month and a half. A lot has happened since the last family gram. Lets see if I can sum it up for all concerned.

The Marines of the S-3 departed with the MEU/TARG on the 14th of August enroute to Hawaii. Once in Hawaii we did our normal outstanding job of coordinating the MEU's training while in port. When not on duty some of the Marines took the opportunity to venture back in time and pay their respects to the hero's of

the past by visiting the battleship USS Arizona that was sunk by Japanese Dec.7,1941.

After the successful training in Hawaii we were off again, this time to Darwin, Australia.

Enroute we resumed our planning for the several

upcoming training events. Along the way we continued our trip back in time as we visited or passed by several historical battle sites such as the Tarawa Atoll. LCpl. Sadoski was chosen to go ashore along with several other Marines from the MEU to show respect by placing a wreath at the Battle of Tarawa war memorial. It was very inspirational and motivational for all involved. A day or so later we passed through the Solomon Islands, and to our

Historic Ops Fun Fact:
Sgt. Manning has found a McDonalds in every port the MEU has visited for liberty...



Intel chills at a spot in Dili

From the Homefront...

Lake O'Neill picnic highlights

Sept. 16 was our first monthly social and I want to thank all those special CE (command element), MSSG (Marine Service Support Group) and BLT (Battalion Landing Team) key volunteers who made it possible.

Attendance was scant – but the folks that did come out to support our 13th MEU family team were a very welcome sight. Thank you from the bottom of our heart for sharing conversation and breaking bread with us. (A video is on the way to the ship of the day's activities.)

Despite the record temperatures out at Lake O'Neil—we had fun playing volleyball with the BLT beating the CE team (who also featured our token ACE family — the Grotmeyers)

The kids also enjoyed face painting, hula-hoop contest, bucket toss, water balloon toss, and a dizzy izzy race. We actually suspended our three-legged race due to the heat!

I want to render a special thanks to the BLT Dad Sergeant B. Cooke and the volunteers he rustled up from the 3/1 admin shop—Cpl. M.W. Brandt and LCpls. J.L. Martinez Jr, J.D. Payne and C. Hsiang. Chaplain J. Cwiklinski, I MEF HQ Group took some time from his birthday to spend with our families. If any family member ever needs to speak to the chaplain, you are more than welcome to call him.

Bowling is rolling right along

Sundays at 5 p.m. at the Camp Pendleton Bowling Alley has come to be a nice weekly haven for our 13th MEU families. I want to thank those folks that have been coming out for some good old-fashioned camaraderie.

Our current bowling teams are: **CE Teams** – G-Force – Eric and Charley Gallagher; Shamrocks – Shannon and Kia Gallagher; Gomez clan – Sonia, Amanda and Ashley Gomez; Inkspots – Michelle Ford and Summer Grathwol; Silver Bullet – Leslie Manning; and the Amphibious Tigers – Buddy and Sylvia Landis.

BLT – Pasta Lovers – Ellen Brady, Danielle Warren and Bridget Phillips; Tres Amigas – Wendy McGraw, Michelle McSorley and Heather Lilly.

MSSG – MSSG-13 - Chizuko Reichsmeier, Valeska and Vanna Corderman; and Better than Zero – Jennifer Hand, Kim Wood and Regina Garcia.

ACE – The Wingers - Michelle, Katie and Lizzy Grotmeyer.

Our top teams as of Sept 17 – 1st – Silver Bullet; 2nd – The Wingers and 3rd – MSSG-13.

Please come out and join us on Sundays for bowling. We welcome new bowlers anytime

because we want you to feel a part of our very special family.

Please join us for our October Fall Festival

Saturday, Oct. 14 will be a fall festival for our next 13th MEU family monthly activity. We are changing the time to noon instead of 11 a.m. to better facilitate some of our families who play youth sports. The event will be held at the Abby Reinke (Wire Mountain) Community Center (As you enter the front gate to Camp Pendleton-turn at the first right and the community center is about one mile up the road on the right-hand side).

For this affair we ask our families to bring the following: names ending in A-G (main entrée); H-M (casserole, appetizer or chips); N-S (dessert); T-Z (salad or fruit).

We ask our families to please call or email your key volunteer prior to Oct. 4 to inform her if you will or will not be attending.

Spiritual enrichment and babysitting co-op offered

Anyone who is interested in starting a spiritual enrichment group to meet every other week is asked to call Michelle Ford.

Any moms who would like to exchange periodic babysitting call Leslie Manning.

Looking for assistance...

Because we really lack any type of recreational money support, I would like to make a plea for any type of donations. We specifically need support for our monthly activities, single Marine care packages and toys for our Christmas party.

Please forward this request on behalf of the 13th MEU to any person, group or business that might be interested in helping our cause. No donation is too small. Checks can be made to 13th MEU Family at my home address. Please contact Sylvia Landis. Email – patty Leatherneck@hotmail.com.

If anyone would like to be on the e-mailing list to receive information concerning the 13th MEU—please send your email address to patty Leatherneck@hotmail.com.

So until next time ...God bless you all...

Editor's Note:

Numbers and addresses have been deleted in the web version to protect the innocent.



Sylvia Landis
13th MEU KVN
Coordinator



Family bowling is going strong, Sundays at 5 p.m. at the Bowling Lanes off Vandegrift Boulevard on Mainside. For more information, contact Sylvia Landis at patty Leatherneck@hotmail.com.

Scoop

from page 5



Some trusty Shellbacks helping those nasty Old Wogs get clean behind their ears.

starboard side was the island of Guadalcanal where the first amphibious landing by Marines during World War II was conducted.

On Aug. 30, the day we crossed the equator "Life as most of the MEU S-3 knew it" ceased to exist. For it was time to enter the Realm of Neptunus Rex for all of those slimy, stinky and nasty WOGS.

Oh! was it a day to remember when all who had not been ordained prior fell to the wrath of the Almighty, All Supreme and All In charge SHELLBACKS. The day started early and was over by midday. The Shellbacks of the MEU S-3: MSgt. Lunday aka "The Master MSGT" and Senior Shellback, and his trusty minions CWO2 Ferguson aka "The Toxic One," SSgt. Mast aka "The Hammer" and Sgt at Arms and Sgt. Manning aka "Dancing Machine," made it memorable for those who had yet been blessed. I would elaborate on what exactly occurred but then I'd be forced to take extreme measures to guard the secrets of the unknown. However, I will tell you it was wet, wild and fun for all.

On Sept. 7, the day that all had been looking forward to, had finally come -- Australia! Our time there was quite exciting for all the Marines of the S-3. For most this was first time they had ever been to another country. We couldn't have



LCpl. Isander Rosa, being cleansed of that dirty, nasty and slimy WOG stench.

picked a better one to start off with. The Australians were extremely courteous, not only on the training and official side but on the fantastic liberty side as well. From the several side-bar conversations I heard from those

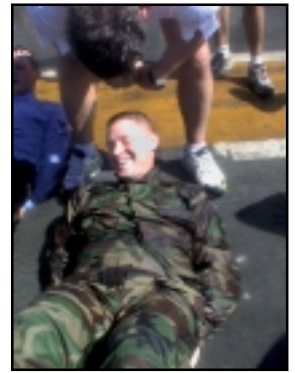
who had ventured out into the local nightlife, all had a very enjoyable time. Lance Cpls. Medina and Sadoski went out to the field with Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 3/1, for Fire Support Training. They both had the opportunity to call a couple of fire missions as well as the opportunity to taste the difference between U.S. MREs and the Australian version.

After leaving the wonderful world from Down Under, the time to play was shelved and on came the game faces. The Marines from the MEU S-3 set the tempo for the upcoming Humanitarian Assistance Operation for the East Timorese people. The 13th MEU/Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group coordinated and conducted an extremely intricate split-ARG Operation. This was facilitated by the outstanding job of our representatives on the advance party, Cpts. Ellinger and Herrera. Not to be forgotten was the outstanding effort of 1st Lt. Leaf Wade, who stepped up to the plate as the interim action officer during Capt. Ellinger's absence. These operations consisted of food off-loads, painting churches/schools, re-roofing several schools and training some of their security and police officers in force protection. Medical and dental support for the children and parents of several communities was provided as well. Several of the S-3 Marines went ashore to help in these tasks/missions. Major Grathwol and Capt. Roach helped put up basketball hoops. Corporal Tyler and LCpl. Rosa helped out with security for the working party that was painting one of the schoolhouses. Captain Bensch continued in assignment as the assistant air officer and the MEU's S-3 representative for the Bravo Command Group aboard the USS Duluth during the actions conducted at East Timor.

Upon leaving the coast of East Timor we were off again, this time to Singapore. Once at anchor the mood of the week was work and play. Singapore, the Jewel of Asia was a beautiful, busy but expensive port of call. However, all who chose to go ashore enjoyed themselves. Sgt. Manning did his normal routine (where is McDonalds)? "Got to have it, I MUST have McDonalds." Don't worry he found one and was very happy afterwards. MSgt. Lunday spent one day out with several of the Marines from the S-2 on a tour over to nearby Malaysia. They all became quite acquainted with the immigra-

tion system for Singapore and Malaysia, especially since that's where they spent most of their time on the tour.

All made it out of Singapore with no one getting caned or jailed for chewing gum and blowing bubbles. All are now looking forward to our next port of call Phuket, Thailand and LIBERTY !!!!!



So there, LtCol. "Ops Wog" Schlaepfer, you just think you're ready to be a Shellback. I think not, says Trusty Shellback "The Master MSGT" Lunday.

Logistics

We have now been on deployment for 48 days, 13 hours, 22 min, and about 14 sec but who's counting? Since Hawaii, we have been to three more ports, all working ones, but that still leaves a little time for libo in the evening. Each port has seemed to have its own special little considerations.

Captains Raftery and Price spent 2 hard weeks as advance party Australia, coordinating transportation, logistics and training before we arrived. SSgt. Schmidt and Sgt. Morneault had their hands in every aspect of this evolution, spending countless hours sitting on the beach waiting for their ride back to the boats! Training with the Aussies was great, and I can easily say that everyone in the S-4 was happy with the way things worked out.

Major Hansen single-handedly loaded the H.M.S. Jervis Bay, sling-loading countless Humvees onto the ship. We think he actually broke a sweat but there was no one there to confirm that. For Australia, it was that the Aussies national pastime is beer drinking!!! Need to say any more?

East Timor proved to be a bit more difficult. Who would have thought that coordinating to feed, shelter, and cloth a third world country would be so hard?! Our only saving grace came from GySgt. Richard who made the whole evolution painless, and also made the 13th MEU S-4

Don't share information on spouses, families

by SSgt. Billy Montgomery

The following is a Personal Security Tip for Families of the 13th MEU(SOC). From time to time, general tips like this will be shared as "food for thought."

This month's topic is "Sharing Information on our Spouses."

We don't like the idea of hostilities arising while our loved ones are afloat, but we've all taken steps to prepare just in

case. Wills, powers of attorney, and arranging family matters all help us cope with hardship in the event our loved ones are called into harm's way.

Equally important, however, is to discuss what information you're going to share about your spouse and his job in the event of a crisis. Unscrupulous foreign intelligence organizations exploit families during times of crisis for information on our Marines and Sailors. Individuals may contact grieving families pretending to

represent non-government organizations seeking information, or they may use an appearance by a family on the news to build a file on an individual or unit.

Remember, intelligence is like building a puzzle. Some pieces may be missing, and some pieces may be mixed in from other puzzles. Every tidbit of information is useful to the enemy. A news article, photograph, or simple comment may add the final piece of the puzzle, completing the enemy's picture of a unit, plan, or individual.

Don't give information to outsiders that isn't clearly essential. Avoid using full unit titles, describing spouse's job specialties, or talking about a unit's future plans. If you're unsure what to say in a crisis, or even during everyday correspondence, sit down and have a discussion with your spouse, and clarify what you may or may not want to discuss with outsiders.

If asked about what I do in the military, I just say I'm a Marine. Every Marine is trained as a basic rifleman, and is always a Marine first! Remember, our family teams are as important to our security as our warfighters.

Semper Fi, be safe, and stay alert!



During a recent family day at Lake O'Neill, family members of 13th MEU(SOC) Marines and Sailors participated in a polluck, with fun and games for the children and a videotape of several family members saying "hello" to their Marines. Here, children get ready to run during the "Dizzy Izzy" competition.

Tarawa

from page 3

cance of this visit was not lost on them.

"Going to Tarawa is a once-in-a-lifetime deal," said SSgt. Alan J. Taylor, who works in the S-2 section for 13th MEU(SOC)'s command element, and whose father hit the beaches of Betio on the second day of the battle. "I'm walking upon the site of one of the Marine Corps' bloodiest battles, a place my father was nearly 60 years ago. I can visualize what he has described without going to the beach — things I have been fortunate not to see firsthand."

"This was a unique opportunity to visit a World War II battlesite," said Col. Gunther. "Not a lot of American servicemembers get to go there, and I was pretty excited about this myself."

Judging from the reaction of the islanders, any time American servicemembers are here, it is an event.

"The last time I saw American military here was 1988," said Betero Teekabu, a policeman here who kept the thick crowds back from the area where the Marines and Sailors conducted the ceremony. "It is always good when you come here. It is good that you remember what happened here, even though it was so long ago."

The citizens here remember in their own ways as well. Displayed on tables in front of the Town Council were bullets, shell casings, artifacts, helmets, even a grenade. A walk around the area revealed an amtrak, a Japanese pillbox pockmarked with strikes from bullets and larger munitions, and other wrecks of the battle which were left to nature's devices.

The climate here has preserved these relics of battle, but not the people who actually

saw it take place.

"Almost all of the people who were here when the battle took place are gone now," Teebaku said. "What we have is what's been passed down."

It is the same sort of thing that keeps sea service history alive — the tradition of passing on what others have gone through. Still, nothing more could be added to what the Marines and Sailors who stormed this island nearly 57 years ago. Col. Gunther ended his speech by reading the inscription of a plaque at a military cemetery here:

"So let them rest on their sun-scoured atoll,

The wind for their watcher, the wave for their shroud,

Where palm and pandanus shall whisper forever

A requiem fitting for heroes proud."

Scoop

from page 7

shine, being recognized by name from the United States Group East Timor (USGET). GySgt. Richard would tell you that it was no big deal but all of us here know that he is just modest, (the hopes of tax free and imminent danger pay will do that for you)!

Singapore was a good training port for units who wanted to get out and do training that will boost your self confidence. We coordinated, begged and pleaded to get the appropriate number of water taxi's and busses for each training day. With the help of Capt. Price who was the advance party it all seemed to work out. Maj. Stout monitored every dollar that was spent. End-of-the-year monies were short, but he always finds a way to make things work. Yelling and screaming seemed to be the preferred method in this port.

Now the S-4 is working and coordinating for our big training evolution in the Persian Gulf, the new motto is Plan early, Plan often! Who needs sleep anyway?

Public Affairs

The Public Affairs gang continues to work hard, trying to spread the word about the exploits of your 13th MEU(SOC) warriors. In my view, this is quite a historic journey – I never thought I'd see Tarawa, Guadalcanal and Iron Bottom Sound during my career. In case you don't know these names, Tarawa was the scene of one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific

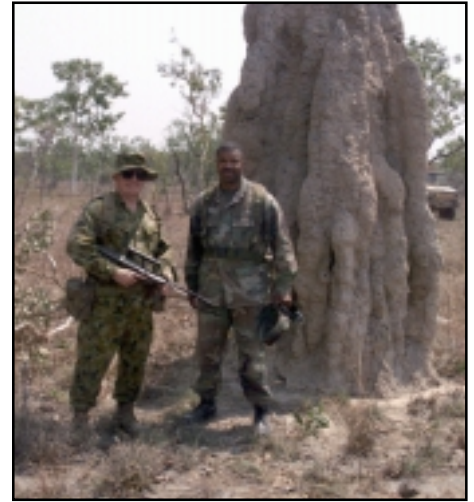
Campaign in World War II; Guadalcanal was the longest campaign in the Pacific and its name graces the logo of 1st Marine Division; and Iron Bottom Sound was the scene of a protracted naval battle between the United States and Japan before and during the Guadalcanal land battle. The name comes from the number of ships that were sunk there.

Enough of the history lesson. While what we're doing is documenting history, we're also making sure we have fun while we do it, like me learning on Photoshop how to take Sgt. Miller out of photographs. Lt. Landis and I still have not been able to crack the Miller code – he says he's having fun, but his face betrays him. I'd hate to play this guy in poker, because you cannot tell one way or another whether he's got a straight flush or a really bad hand. I wonder how he'd react if he won the lottery?

"It's okay," he'd probably say. "I'm just going to let Tami have it all and play with Joshua and the baby."

By the way, Sgt. Miller is the only American I know who hates baseball. I can see it's going to take years to crack the Miller code...

As far as the Landog goes, he should just answer the phone as "James Brown," because he's the hardest-working man in the PA field. And his chief keeps him that way by constantly ducking out and claiming to be taking "photos" of Marines conducting "training." In reality, I take my camera down to berthing and take naps. It's the only way I can keep up. It's a good thing Sgt. Miller is here, because he keeps the Landog occupied with his arcane quips



"Hey buddy, watch where you're pointing that thing..." SSgt. Gude and an Aussie sergeant major.

and poker face. The lieutenant is so busy wondering about Sgt. Miller, he's got no time to worry about me.

No one should worry about me. As long as I have jelly beans and Lorna Doone cookies I'm cool. We did have that scare when I was asleep in the rack while a "man overboard" drill took place, but believe me, after spending so much time in the Marine Corps and being in places I wouldn't send roaches to live, I wasn't about to go overboard. Anyway, once the XO awakened me, we straightened things out quickly.

Since we work in the same office as the S-6 Data Marines, they're getting a big taste of the Gooch personality, especially Sgt. Dellinger, who actually seems to believe he can defeat the almighty Gooch in basketball. Sgt. Dellinger admittedly

please see SCOOP, Page 10

Oecussi

from page 3

Marines brought close to 100 tons of raw building material and 140 tons of food to the needy people.

Oecussi citizens, United Nations officials and the World Food Organization were waiting enthusiastically for the 30-Marine detachment when it arrived the first day with much needed help.

"This is great timing for this delivery," said Jim Finlay, a member of Caritas, Australia, the organization overseeing all deliveries into Oecussi. "The militias are still active in West Timor and the food supply from West Timor is not guaranteed

anymore."

A 360-degree security perimeter was set up around the LCACs as soon as they arrived. The 13 Marines from the 13th MEU(SOC)'s Combat Engineer detachment watched out for the local militia and other threats in the area while the Landing Force Shore Party directed the U.N. offload of the supplies.

"Even though we are doing something good, some people here do not want us helping these people," said Cpl. Gregory Kolaske, a 30-year-old Transportation Support Detachment, MEU Service Support Group 13 dispatcher from Tampa, Fla. "A good thing could turn sour at any moment and that is always in the backs of

our minds. Even though we wish we didn't need the security, it is still a must."

"We are fortunate to have a military organization delivering the food this time," Finlay said. "It reminds the militias to stay calm."

For most of the Marines involved in this operation, it was their first time conducting an offload like this in a real-world situation.

"This is exciting," Kolaske said. "We actually get to help people that are in need. These people really seem to appreciate what we are doing. Most of the city turned out to watch us when we came to offload. We are really affecting their lives here."

had the upper hand in smack-talking until last week, when I finally laid the smack down. Now, we both have to prove it on the court. As far as I'm concerned, that will be no problem for me. As for the Data man, we'll see.

Actually, there is one problem. I keep telling everyone I like Brach's jelly beans, but I keep getting Starburst. Now, there's nothing wrong with Starburst – they're great and I appreciate all the sugar – but they're not Brach's. My mouth still waters for Brach's.

Thank you for all the positive comments about the Family Gram. Last month's was my first time dealing with Pagemaker in a long time, and I was very rusty. Hopefully, this month's is more indicative of what I can do. I like to add a little humor to what is usually a pretty sober publication.

Here's a collective "hello" and "we love you" to the PA wives and families. Keep sending the goodies!

Data/Communications

Congratulations to MSgt. Burcham and his wife, who gave birth to their son, James Anthony Burcham, Sept. 11. Both father and son share the same birthday.

Two words that describe the Marines of S-6 are "hard working." Having demonstrated superior skills in communications and computer operations in East Timor, the Marines of Comm were tasked with the jobs of SatCom, networking and maintaining the Landing Forces Operations Center for Marines ashore in East Timor. In the three days they were ashore, Sgt. Thogerson and Cpls. Volante, Quintero, Grimes, Amedee, Stallings, Kempf, Arriaga, Mendoza, Hall and LCpl. Patlan had comm established at every site, including Dili, Maliana and Oecussi. They linked all the ships and ground forces together. Most radio operators were attached to security teams assisting in the delivery of food, building supplies and medical and dental supplies while Sgt. Goulding and Cpl. Stigers assisted in the advance party with 1stLt. Blocksidge.

Sergeants McKnight, Eristhee and Mawson, Cpls. Solis, Gabriel, Creel, Stephens and Sellers and LCpl. Pinnix were

essential watch standers in the LFOC, monitoring incoming and outgoing messages from Marines on the ground.

The Marines of Data Comm helped prepare the relocation of the USGET network to the AMOS W Barge. Lance Cpls. Gericke, Zavala, Petelle and Matta ran approximately 1,500 meters of local area network cable while Cpl. Walker showed USGET administrators how to move their Exchange Enterprise Server to their new location to complete the task. Cpl. Lostaunau took on the task of keeping the Duluth on line with the SIPR/NIPRnet.

Staff Sgt. Siciliano, Sgts. Dellinger and Caballero and Cpl. Page were part of the Media Escort Group that assisted PAO, giving journalists a tour of Marine operations in East Timor.

Corporal Hall deserves a special "job well done," by recently earning "NCO of the Quarter."

Lance Cpl. Walkley has distinguished himself by helping maintain the data network aboard USS Anchorage. He is doing a fine job there.

Morale in the S-6 is high as we progress through the deployment. We look forward to bigger challenges in the future. From all of the S-6 section, we miss you! Bye for now.

Disbursing

Wow, what a month it has been. Our pot of cash is getting smaller, which means that our homecoming is getting closer. The Marines have been keeping very busy ensuring that everyone is getting the hard earned pay that they truly deserve.

Split Pay has certainly proved to be a challenge in and of itself. Cpl. Cole and Cpl. Moreno say that by next month, they will have memorized everyone's name and SSN that is on Split Pay. Upon completion of that feat, they will be awarded the Split Pay Medal. Not very many can take claim to that award; in fact, I can't think of anyone who currently has it.

Since leaving Australia, I have noticed a change in SSgt. Gomez', soon to be GySgt. Gomez', attitude. After having a long chat with him, it seems that the staff

sergeant has been mentally debating whether or not to give up his citizenship to become an Australian. He says he really enjoys the "laid back" atmosphere. Sonia, you and the kids may want to start packing your bags.

As for the good ol' Lieutenant (aka Protocol Officer, S-1A, Chaplain A, Ship's Tour Liaison Officer, and whatever else awaits in the near future), I just want to say hello to my beautiful wife. I love you, Bunny.

Historic Legal Moment:

Cpl. Hanson manages to sleep through a fast rope and media event...

Legal

Corporal Hanson continues to keep the SJA office running like a well-oiled machine. In appreciation for all her hard work drafting wills and powers of attorney, Kilo Company invited her to go fast roping. Being the hardcharger that she is accepted the invitation and decided to rest-up before the big event. Unfortunately, Corporal Hanson is also a good sleeper. She ended up sleeping through the fast roping exercise. 1stSgt. Martinez has assured her there will be a next time. In addition to her legal duties, Cpl. Hanson also went ashore in East Timor as a media escort. It seems she also has a knack for public affairs. (*Editor's note – she was caught sleeping there as well...*) WATCH OUT PA!

From the Doc's bag

With all the fanfare of pomp and circumstance, the East Timor malaria pill giveaway was joined. The pills were packaged, the instructions typed and the distribution completed. There was never any worry your Chief was up to the task, and you were not overlooked.

As the MEU's medical representative for the East Timor working group, I am happy to report that the plans for the MEDCAP/DENCAP missions came to wonderful fruition.

As a result of the hard work and dedication of all Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU, the total medical patients seen were 629. Total dental patients seen were 255, for a grand total patients given the best medical care the United States military

3/1 TRAP mission a success

by SSgt. Stephen Gude

KANGAROO FLATS TRAINING AREA, Northern Territory, Australia – The thick fog shrouding the wetlands of the Northern Territory concealed events happening above and below its cloudy mass.

These events would come together as one; above, three CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters carried 27 Marines from K Company, Battalion Landing Team 3/1 to what was waiting below: two downed pilots and 15 to 20 enemy forces looking for the pilots.

The mission of the K Co. Marines, who are part of 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), was to conduct a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel. It was all a matter of getting there first with the most, and getting out quickly.

“Our job is to basically beat the enemy to the pilot,” said 1st Lt. Tim Brady, 25, of Clifton, Va. The lieutenant was the ground combat element commander on the mission. “The TRAP force will provide security in the landing zone, fight off the enemy if necessary and recover the downed pilot.”

Staff Sgt. Joseph Roach, the platoon

sergeant, put it succinctly: “We’ve got 27 Marines going in; we’re going to have 29 people coming out.”

To that end, the TRAP force embarked on a 35-minute flight to the area where the pilots were. As soon as the Sea Knights landed, a force hidden in the brush about 100 yards to the left of the Marines began firing on them. The Marines’ tactical discipline served them well, as they immediately located the threat and advanced toward the ambush, while at the same time a team brought in a stretcher to bring out one of the pilots, who was wounded.

Once the team reached the pilots, other Marines established security around them, while two AH-1W Cobras helped



SSgt. Stephen Gude

Marines and a corpsman from Battalion Landing Team 3/1, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), carry a “downed pilot” (played by an Australian) to a rendezvous point to be picked up by a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter. The Marines conducted a TRAP during training in Australia.

suppress the threat from the “enemy,” which were really Australian Army soldiers (as were the pilots). One pilot could walk, but the other had debilitating injuries and had to be carried. Four Marines quickly stabilized him, loaded him on the stretcher, and with the security element moving around them, ran back to the landing zone, where a yellow smoke grenade was set off to mark the LZ for the returning Sea Knights.

By this time, the fire from the Aussie interlopers had been silenced, and with the Cobras continuing to fly cover, the medium cargo and troop carrying helicopters landed. The Marines, with the two pilots in tow, quickly boarded and the helicopters took off.

The TRAP, from the time the Ch-46s first landed until they took off again, took less than five minutes.

“That’s what the mission calls for,” 1st Lt. Brady said. “We are supposed to get in there and get the guy out.”

“It’s not a time to stand and fight,” SSgt. Roach said. “The speed of the operation reduces the danger for all parties concerned.”

The three cargo and two attack helicopters flew off above the fog, bringing with them the prize that, just a few minutes before, had been hidden below.

Scoop

from page 9

could give was 884 East Timorese. Bravo Zulu to all who were involved, both in the planning and execution.

Other medical issues, we had some of our number who took advantage of the medical accommodations on the ship, but when all was said and done, they were nursed back to health and returned back to work.

Our first month has come and gone, keep up the good work and continue to stay healthy. But if you find that you’re not your “fighting tip of the spear 13th MEU self” remember, that’s why the medical department is here. Semper Fi.

HQ Commandant

The Marines of the S-7 are working hard to maintain a clean and safe environment aboard ship for the Marines as this poses a challenge with such a veteran ship. Month one and two gave a good majority of our Marines a touch of home-sickness, which passed in a short amount of time. Cpl. Delorenzo is working hard with the Combat Cargo unit getting the job done. Sgt. Brooks and Cpl. Shelton are on a constant mission with the ships crew ensuring that all berthing maintenance problems that affect our Marines are solved. Cpl. Peroutka is exercising his expertise in the culinary art preparing quality food for our flag mess. All in all, the Marines are well prepared to deal with the deployment.

The Last Page

Half-inch scars and sharpened butter knives

by SSgt. Stephen Gude

When people ask me why I joined the Marine Corps and not the other services, I usually tell them because the Marine Corps called my house first and were the most persistent. And I liked the “No pain, no gain” mentality of the Corps.

Truth is, there are other reasons I didn’t join the other services. I didn’t join the Army because I didn’t like what some of my cousins who were soldiers at the time were saying about it. I didn’t join the Air Force because its recruiter called after the Corps’, and I had already made up my mind to become a Marine.

And every time I bang my head on one of the hard surfaces of the USS Tarawa, I’m reminded of why I didn’t join the Navy.

I’ve realized that to be a Sailor, you have to be a special person who learns, or develops the intuition, that if there is something close to your head and if you move over another inch, you will bang your head right into it. I’ve banged my

head three times already, and I’ve only been on the ship for less than two months.

It was the same way in 1990, when I spent two months aboard Tarawa as part of Exercise RimPac ’90. I hit my head so many times I think I’ve suffered from memory loss and lapses...

What? Huh?

...in thought and speech. One particular head bang left a half-inch scar on my forehead, the sort of scar that gives a man character:

(Imagine me in a smoky bar on the wrong side of a skanky foreign town. A ruffian comes up to me and sizes me up.

He speaks to me in a villainous Franco-Spanish accent.)

“Hey, American. What’s with the scar?”

I quaff the remainder of my brew, slam the glass back on the bar, breaking it and

cutting my hand in the process. I pull the patch from over my eye (and underneath my thick Coke-bottle glasses), displaying a wandering glass eye, trying to look at the blood on my hand. I taste it. I speak, in Ebonics.

“Why you hasslin’ me, jive turkey? Don’t worry ‘bout where I got the scar; you’d best worry ‘bout the scar I’m gonna give you if you don’t get out of here!” I pull a sharpened butter knife and flash it, its stainless steel blade flickering in the dim neon light of the bar.

The Franco-Spainard looks at me

for a tension-filled 10 seconds. Then he laughs, claps me on the back and says “I like you, American! Usually I keel men who pull, er... knives on me, but you are funny. I let you live!” Then he buys me warm brewskies the rest of the night, trying to get me “drunk” enough to eat quiche, but how can a man with a rugged half-inch scar like mine eat quiche? With a sharpened butter knife?

The scar gave me character for about six months, until it healed over. When I got back home, people wanted to touch it – “Yeah, it’s real,” I’d say – and it was a conversation piece at parties.

“Hey, Gooch, how’d you get the scar, man?”

“Well, this Franco-Spaniard with a sharpened butter knife attacked me, and I had to kick his butt,” I’d say. “He scratched me a lil’ bit, but I just put a stitch in it, like Stallone in ‘Rambo,’ and it was cool.”

“Man, you are hard,” they’d say.

“I know. Now go get me a brew,” I’d demand.

I’ve searched in vain for that scar again, to see if my face still has character, but the only “character” my face displays is that I look WAY older than I used to. Of course, I AM way older than I used to be, so that was stupid.

Anyway, now I have four and a half months left to try to bang my head into another hard shipboard object. I’m certain I’ll be able to do a better job this time of forming a scar that leaves character. Maybe I can form a scar three-quarters of an inch long.

No pain, no gain.

‘...how can a man with
a rugged half-inch scar
like mine eat quiche?’

SSgt. Stephen Gude

The Last Word



SSgt. Stephen Gude

‘Does this bird make a stop at Camp Pendleton?’

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